

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 IO-13 MCT-01 /084 W
-----059157 101413Z /53
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FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6154
INFO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0976

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PINT, IZ, IR
SUBJECT: IRAQI-IRANIAN PILGRIMAGE AGREEMENT

REF: BAGHDAD 952

1. IRANIAN COUNSELOR BRIEFED US ON PILGRIMAGE AGREEMENT REPORTED REFTEL. HE SAID THAT FORTH THOUSAND PILGRIMS, WHILE A BIG JUMP FROM LAST YEAR'S FIGURE OF FOURTEEN THOUSAND, WAS STILL FAR BELOW THE LEVEL PREVAILING IN THE PERIOD BEFORE IRAQ STOPPED IRANIAN PILGRIMS FROM ENTERING THE COUNTRY. COUNSELOR CONFIRMED THAT PILGRIMS MUST BE IN GROUPS AND ADDED THAT THEY CAN ONLY ENTER BY AIRCRAFT. IRANIANS PRESSED UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR PERMISSION TO TRANSPORT PILGRIMS INTO IRAQ BY BUS.

2. COUNSELOR NOTED THAT AGREEMENT IS BASED ON PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY, WHEREBY UP TO FORTY THOUSAND IRAQI PILGRIMS COULD VISIT SHIA HOLY PLACES AT QUM AND MESHED. HE OBSERVED, HOWEVER, THAT NO ONE EXPECTED NEARLY THAT MANY TO MAKE THE TRIP.

3. COMMENT: WHILE FALLING SHORT OF MAXIMUM IRANIAN OBJECTIVES, PILGRIMAGE AGREEMENT IS A CLEAR PLUS IN
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RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. IT IS ANOTHER SIGN THAT DETENTE BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN IS BEARING PRACITICAL FRUIT AS A RESULT OF CAREFUL NEGOTIATIOS BY OFFICIALS OF BOTH NATIONS.
PECK

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 10 may 1978
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